Port Talbot English

Port Talbot English (**PTE**) is a variety of Welsh English spoken in Port Talbot, generally by the working class.[1]

Port Talbot English	
Native to	United Kingdom
Region	Port Talbot
Language family	Indo-European ▪ Germanic ▪ West Germanic ▪ Ingvaeonic ▪ Anglic ▪ English ▪ British English ▪ Welsh English ▪ **Port Talbot English**
Writing system	Latin (English alphabet)
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	–
Glottolog	*None*

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Phonetics and phonology

Consonants

Consonants in Port Talbot English generally follow those of Received Pronunciation. Some phonological characteristics of consonants specific to PTE include:

- Consonants can be geminated by any preceding vowel except long non-close vowels, which is most noticeable for fortis plosives and when they are in intervocalic positions. For instance, the plosives in these pairs are lengthened: *lob–lobby*, *shunt–shunting* and *sit–city*. In clusters, the first of any fortis elements is selected: /t/ in *shunting* or /s/ in *nasty* or simply the first consonant when there is no fortis element, as in *lovely* in which /v/ is lengthened.[2].
- The voiceless stops /p, t, k/ have considerable strong aspiration [pʰʰ, tʰʰ, kʰʰ], often as a weak affricate [pɸ, ts, kx]. That is especially for the case of /t/.[1]
- T-glottalization is uncommon but may occur word-finally.[1]
- H-dropping also often occurs.[1]
- /tr, dr/ are postalveolar affricates [t̠ɹ̠˔, d̠ɹ̠˔], as in RP.[1]
- /r/ is more often a tap [ɾ] than an approximant [ɹ].[1]

- Like many other Welsh accents, Port Talbot English is mostly non-rhotic although a small minority of speakers may supplant the front vowel of *bird* with /ə˞/, like in many varieties of North American English.[3]
- /l/ is always clear [l̪].[1]
- Consonants from Welsh such as [ɬ̪] and [χ̪] are encountered in local Welsh placenames.[1][4]

Vowels

Monophthongs

Monophthongs of PTE[5]

	Front			Central	Back	
	unrounded		rounded			
	short	long			short	long
Close	ɪ	iː			ʊ	uː
Close-mid		eː	øː			oː
Open-mid	ɛ	ɛː		ə		
Open	a	aː			ɒ	ɒː

Length

- Unstressed long vowels tend to be shortened, as seen in *free wheel* [fri ˈwiːl].[2]
- Sometimes, under the same environment as geminating consonants, short vowels can be lengthened as in *casserole* [ˈkaːsəroːl].[2]

Quality

- The HAPPY vowel is tense, but unlike Received Pronunciation, it is long [iː], as in the FLEECE vowel (see Happy tensing).[6]
- Vowels corresponding to unstressed /ɪ/ in RP are as follows:[6]
  - /ɪ/ in the inflectional suffixes *-ed* and *-es*;
  - /ə/ in the suffix *-est*;
  - /iː/ in prefixes like *anti-* and *poly-*.
- There is no contrastive NEAR vowel. Depending on word, it is replaced by either FLEECE (in polysyllables), a disyllabic sequence of FLEECE and COMMA /iːə/ (in monosyllables) and a monosyllabic sequence /jøː/ when word initial (including *hear* and *here*, where the /h/ is generally dropped).[6]
- As in many other southern Welsh accents, the NURSE vowel is rounded and fronted to [øː]. However, a small minority of speakers realise it as [ər ~ əɪ].[7]
- The horse–hoarse merger is absent in PTE, hence the words *horse* /ɒː/ and *hoarse* /oː/ are kept distinct. /oː/ is found in *fortress* and *important*, where the *horse* vowel may be found in

other dialects that keep the distinction.[8]

- /ə/ is open-mid [ɜ] in stressed positions. When unstressed, it may be slightly raised to mid [ə].[9]
- The THOUGHT vowel is mainly /ɒː/. Exceptions are before /l/ and /st/, as in *all* or *exhaust*, as well as the word *saucepan*, where it is replaced by the LOT vowel /ɒ/. However long /ɒː/ does appear before the cluster /ld/ and the word *palsy*.[6]
- The trap–bath split is nearly absent, although the word *bath* along with *path*, *laugh* and its derivatives, *ghastly* and *last(ly)* have a long PALM /aː/, yet just like in Northern England, the remainder of BATH words are short /a/.[6]
- The TRAP words *bad*, *bag* and *man* are often found with long /aː/.[6]

Diphthongs

Diphthongs of PTE are /ɪʊ, eɪ, oʊ, ʌɪ, ʌʊ, ɒɪ/. PRICE words are mostly pronounced with /ʌɪ/, but there also exists a marginal /aɪ/ which appears in a small number of words, such as *Dai* and *aye*.[10]

PTE, like Welsh dialects such as Abercraf English, has preserved several diphthong–monophthong distinctions that other varieties have not. They include:

- A distinction between /ɪʊ/ and /uː/, corresponding to the GOOSE vowel in other dialects. Thus the pairs *blue*/*blew* and *grue*/*grew* are not homophones.[10]
  - When a word is spelt with an ⟨o⟩, the corresponding vowel is /uː/. It also occurs in the words *insurance* and *surety*.
  - The spellings ⟨u⟩, ⟨ue⟩ and ⟨ui⟩ following ⟨r⟩ are typically pronounced /uː/.
  - /uː/ can also be found in the word *blue*, and the sequence ⟨luC⟩, such as *flute*, *lunatic* and *Pluto*
  - /ɪʊ/ is found otherwise, such as *crew* or *glue*.
- The sequence /juː/ in most dialects will be rendered as /jɪʊ/ in word-initial position and after ⟨y⟩, such as *use* and *youth*. *You* and its derivatives can be pronounced either as /jɪʊ/ or /ɪʊ/. /ɪʊ/ is otherwise found for all other positions.[10]
- Another distinction for the FACE and GOAT lexical sets, thus the minimal pairs *pain*/*pane* and *toe*/*tow* (see Long mid mergers). They are generally diphthongised as /eɪ/ and /oʊ/ when the spelling contains ⟨i⟩/⟨y⟩ and ⟨u⟩/⟨w⟩ respectively and monophthongised as /eː/ and /oː/ elsewhere. However, these are subject to several exceptions:[11]
  - The FACE vowel is always diphthong word-finally or preceding a vowel. It is further seen in the suffix sequence ⟨-atiV⟩, thus *café*, *mosaic* and *patience* are always /eɪ/. It is usually a diphthong before a nasal (*strange* and *came*), however proper names do have a monophthong (*Cambridge* and *James*).
  - The FACE is a monophthong in *bait*, *gait*, *gaiter*, *Jamaica*, *raisin*, *traipse* and *waist*.
  - Before a single ⟨l⟩, the GOAT is always diphthongal, such as *coal* or *gold*. The spelling ⟨oll⟩ is diphthongal in *roll*, *stroll* and its derivatives, yet monophthongal elsewhere.
  - GOAT is monophthongal in *(al)though*, and morpheme-final *-ow* (*elbow* and *window*).
  - *Own* as a possessive adjective (such as *your own*) is monophthongal.[6]

Elision and assimilation

- /t, d/, at the end of a morpheme or word, are very commonly elided: *not good* and *handbag* /ˈhambag/, the latter with the assimilation of the nasal with the *b*.[9]
- The indefinite article *an* (before a vowel) may be reduced to *a*, as in *a apple* /ə ˈapəl/.[1]
- The schwa /ə/ is often elided although but it is also very common to retain it.[9]
- The sequence *co(-)op*, like in the rest of South Wales, is characteristically pronounced like *cop* /kɒp/.[9]
- Elisions in the phrases *isn't it?* /ˈɪn ɪt/, *never mind* /ˈnɛː ˈmʌɪn/ and *there you are* /ˈdɛː ˈwaː/ are very common.[9]
- *Why* + negative *do*, such as *why don't*, *why doesn't* or *why didn't* is also very commonly elided to /ˈwʌɪn/.[9]

Phonemic incidence

- Like in most of Northern England and the Midlands, *tooth* is pronounced with the FOOT vowel, as in /tʊθ/.[6]
- *Mauve* is pronounced with./ɒː/, instead of /oː/ or /oʊ/.[6]
- *Motor* is pronounced /ˈmoːtoː/, and the strong form of *their* is pronounced /ˈðeɪə/.[6]
- In an address, *girl* and *man* are pronounced with the STRUT vowel /ə/.[6]

The following features apply for only some speakers:[9]

- *Daunt* and *jaunt* may be pronounced with /a/.
- *Hose* and *whole* may be pronounced with /uː/ and *area* with /eː/.
- *Want* may be pronounced with /ə/, instead of /ɒ/.

Prosody

- Intonation in PTE is similar to Abercraf English. One prominent pattern is that the main pitch movement is not necessarily confined to the stressed syllable but can be spread further, to the end of the word.[2]
- Like in other Welsh accents, PTE tends to avoid having double stress patterns, making words such as *Bridgend* or *icecream* lose their secondary stress.[9]

Grammar

- *Ain't* commonly used as a negation.[12]
- The Northern Subject Rule is used in present-tense verb forms and extends to personal pronouns: *I goes to work*, *the birds sings* and *you says*.[12]
- Certain words have grammatical meaning unique to PTE, including *after* meaning 'later' and *never* as 'didn't'.[12]
- Double negatives occur, much like in other vernacular English dialects.[12]
- The prepositions *on*, *by* and *for* are used idiomatically, as is characteristic for South Wales accent: *by here/there*. Phrasal examples include *what is on this?* (what's the matter with this), *there's times on him/her* (he/she is in a temper), *what's the time by you* (what's an appropriate

time for you), *you can't go by him/her* (you can:t depend on him/her) and *there's gratitude for you* (you're appreciated).[13]

Vocabulary

- *ashman* — bin man, dustman[13]
- *cam* — a stride[12]
- *crachach* — used everywhere in Wales; a derogatory term used to refer to members of the Establishment in the country.[14][15] It can simply refer to 'posh people'.[12]
- *lose* — to miss (e.g. a bus)[12]
- *poin* — to pester, to nag (from Welsh *poeni*)[12]
- *troughing* — guttering[13]
- *venter* — to bet (from Welsh *fentro*, a mutated form of *mentro*)[12]

Idioms

Examples of commonly-used idiomatic phrases in PTE:[13]

- *burnt to glory* — burnt to the point of ashes[13]
- *gone home* — said when a piece of clothing has worn out[13]
- *possible if* — in PTE it specifically means 'surely it's not that case that...'[13]
- *sure to be* — a phrase that represents 'certainly' or 'without a doubt'[13]

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6. Connolly (1990), p. 124.
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